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June 24, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
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Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Sachi A. Hamai
Chief Executive Officer

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MOTION TO OPPOSE THE REFINED E-2 ALIGNMENT FOR THE CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY'S PALMDALE-TO-BURBANK HIGH-SPEED RAIL PROJECT SEGMENT (ITEM NO. 23, AGENDA OF JUNE 28, 2016)

Item No. 23 on the June 28, 2016 Agenda is a motion by Supervisor Antonovich recommending that the Board: 1) oppose the Refined E-2 Alignment for the California High-Speed Rail Authority's Palmdale-to-Burbank High-Speed Rail Project segment, and any other variation of this alignment that would cross the Big Tujunga Wash at or above grade; and 2) send a five-signature letter to the California High-Speed Rail Authority Board and the Los Angeles County State Delegation reflecting the aforementioned.

There is no Board-approved policy specific to the California High-Speed Rail or its proposed alignments or routes. **Therefore, support for this motion is a matter of Board policy determination.**

Background

The California High-Speed Rail (CHSR) is planned to run from San Francisco to the Los Angeles Basin, and will eventually extend to Sacramento and San Diego. Construction of the CHSR is underway in the Central Valley, and the CHSR Authority is working to identify the preferred routes in Northern and Southern California. The Palmdale-to-Burbank Project segment is currently in the environmental and engineering study phase and the CHSR Authority is working toward the release of a draft environmental document in 2017.

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Palmdale-to-Burbank Project Segment

According to the California HSR Authority's Supplemental Alternatives Analysis Report (released in April 2016), the Palmdale-to-Burbank Project segment is approximately 35 to 45 miles long and will connect the Antelope Valley to the San Fernando Valley. The section will have stations in Palmdale and Burbank and will tunnel under the San Gabriel Mountains.

Four sets of potential alignment alternatives for the Palmdale-to-Burbank Project segment have been under preliminary study over the past several years. Alignments along the State Route 14 alignment follow that State highway and then proceeds along San Fernando Boulevard through the communities of Sylmar, San Fernando, and Pacoima, among others, before arriving at the planned station at the Burbank Airport. Additional alignments on the East Corridor – the E1, E2, and E3 routes – are largely subterranean routes under the San Gabriel Mountains.

The California High Speed Rail Authority reports that multiple potential alignment alternatives were identified and considered as a result of ongoing engineering and environmental technical evaluations, as well as community and regulatory agency input. The CHSR Authority indicates that it considered two alternative E2 alignments based on initial engineering feasibility requirements and sought to reduce environmental impacts while improving operational capability and travel time. Three alignment alternatives will be carried forward for further study in the draft environmental document: Refined State Route 14; Refined E1, and Refined E-2.

The California High Speed Rail Authority notes that proposed Refined E-2 Alignment would cross over the Big Tujunga Wash, but was developed to optimize design to reduce potential surface impacts by increasing tunnel length and to avoid crossing over a designated mitigation area within the Wash that is owned by Los Angeles County Flood Control District.

The California High Speed Rail Authority also reports that it is coordinating with the United States Forestry Service on geotechnical investigations within the Angeles National Forest to obtain subsurface field data to help evaluate the tunnel portion of the proposed alignments with respect to potential environmental impacts (i.e., groundwater, hydrogeology, and surface water resources), design constraints, and construction constraints.

The Department of Public Works reports that the Refined E2 Alignment crosses Big Tujunga Wash upstream of Hansen Dam and has no impact on the County's Flood Control/Public Works facilities. The area where the alignment crosses Big Tujunga Wash is a natural area and likely under private ownership.

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Conclusion

There is no Board-approved policy specific to the California High-Speed Rail or its proposed alignments or routes. **Therefore, support for this motion is a matter of Board policy determination.**

We will continue to keep you advised.

SAH:JJ:MR
AO:gl

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
 County Counsel
 Public Works